

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

1. (currently amended) A method of providing a bone implant comprising:

demineralizing a block of cancellous bone having a first geometry;

wetting the block;

compressing the block from the first geometry to a second geometry smaller than the first geometry;

hardening the block after the block has been compressed to the second geometry; and

re-expanding the block to a third geometry larger than the second geometry.
2. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the second geometry is configured and dimensioned as a pellet.
3. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the second geometry is configured and dimensioned as a cylinder.
4. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the second geometry is configured and dimensioned as a generally flat shape.
5. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the second geometry is configured and dimensioned as a donut-like shape.

6. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the second geometry is configured and dimensioned as a dumbbell shape.

7. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

exposing the block to a swelling agent.

8. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

inserting the block into an anatomical space.

9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 1[[9]], wherein the third geometry is smaller than the first geometry.

11. (currently amended) A method of providing a bone implant comprising:

demineralizing a block of cancellous bone having a first geometry;

wetting the block;

compressing the block from the first geometry to a second geometry smaller than the first geometry;

hardening the block after the block has been compressed to the second geometry; and The method of claim 1, further comprising:

inserting the block into a spinal cage.

12. (previously presented) The method of claim 11, further comprising:

re-expanding the block in the spinal cage to a third geometry larger than the second geometry.

13. (previously presented) The method of claim 12, wherein the third geometry is smaller than the first geometry.

14. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of wetting the block comprises hydrating the block.

15. (currently amended) A method of providing a bone implant comprising:

demineralizing a block of cancellous bone having a first geometry;

softening the block so that the block may be compressed from the first geometry to a second geometry smaller than the first geometry;

permitting the block to harden after the block has been compressed to the second geometry;

inserting the block into a cavity; and

re-expanding the block to a third geometry larger than the second geometry, wherein the third geometry is cylindrical in shape.

16. (previously presented) The method of claim 15, wherein the step of softening the block comprises applying a swelling agent to the block.

17. (canceled)

18. (canceled)

19. (canceled)

20. (canceled)

21. (currently amended) A method of providing a bone implant comprising:

demineralizing a block of cancellous bone having a first geometry;

softening the block so that the block may be compressed from the first geometry to a second geometry smaller than the first geometry;

permitting the block to harden after the block has been compressed to the second geometry;

inserting the block into a cavity; and

re-expanding the block to a third geometry larger than the second geometry ~~The method of claim~~

17, wherein the cavity is defined by a spinal cage.

22. (previously presented) The method of claim 21, wherein the spinal cage includes perforations and the third geometry of the expanded block fills at least part of the cavity and at least some of the perforations.

23. (canceled)

24. (previously presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the swelling agent is water.
25. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the hardening step includes drying the block.
26. (currently amended) The method of claim 1[[9]], wherein the re-expanding step includes hydrating the block.
27. (previously presented) The method of claim 7, wherein the swelling agent is water.
28. (currently amended) A method of preparing a bone implant comprising:
demineralizing ~~demineralizing~~ a block of cancellous bone having a first geometry;
hydrating the block so that the block may be compressed from the first geometry to a second geometry smaller than the first geometry; ~~and~~
dehydrating the block;
inserting the dehydrated block into a hollow cage; and
re-expanding the block to a third geometry larger than the second geometry.
29. (previously presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the step of dehydrating the block includes hardening the block.

30. (previously presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the second geometry has a pellet-like shape.

31. (canceled)

32. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~28~~34, wherein the re-expanding ~~rehydrating~~ step includes wetting the block with a swelling agent.

33. (previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the swelling agent is water.

34. (canceled)

35. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~28~~34, wherein the hollow cage is a spinal cage.

36. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~28~~34, wherein the hollow cage has a cylindrical shape defining a cavity therein.

37. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~28~~34, wherein the hollow cage includes perforations and the third configuration of the expanded block fills at least some of the perforations.

38. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~28~~34, wherein the third geometry is smaller than the first geometry.

39. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~28~~34, wherein the dehydrating step includes freeze drying the block.

40. (previously presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the second geometry has a pellet-like shape.